

### Book Reviews

*Die Wiener Medizinische Schule im 19 Jahrhundert*, by ERNA LESKY (*Studies in the History of the University of Vienna*, vol. VI), Cologne, Böhlau, 1965, pp. 660, illus., DM.66.

Professor E. Lesky, the well-known Director of the Institute of Medical History of the University of Vienna, sets out to show the extraordinary development of medicine which took place in Vienna in the course of the nineteenth century, especially in its second half. She divides the epoch into three periods and for each of them relates the history of each of the medical specialties, insofar as they were then in existence, separately. This seems to be quite a good arrangement, but makes some repetition inevitable.

In the first period, which comprises the first 48 years of the century, the absolutist era of the 'Vormärz', one of the main medical figures was J. A. Stifft, who as the personal medical adviser of the emperor and of the court had become 'protomedicus' and director of the medical faculty and of the medical studies. Lesky shows how he acted as 'medical policeman', supervising the faculty and the doctors. As an example of his activities she relates the story of the persecution of J. P. Frank, the distinguished professor of internal medicine, and of F. J. Gall, the famous inventor of phrenology and first investigator of the cerebral centres. Frank was a follower of John Brown's 'Solidarpathology' which assumed an equilibrium between irritability and stimulus in the organism; this was contrary to the then still prevailing theory of humoral pathology of Van Swieten's first Viennese medical school. Frank was also one of the first advocates of Jenner's vaccination against smallpox; in this matter Stifft followed Frank's advice. But nevertheless he and Gall had to leave Vienna and went to Paris. Later in the fourth and fifth decades of the century there followed a period in which methods of natural healing and therapeutic nihilism became prevalent; but at the same time, as Lesky shows, Hahnemann's homeopathy and Mesmer's magnetism found a great number of followers, and there were also trends which developed into a 'Romantic Medicine' under the influence of natural-philosophical ideas. As one exponent of the latter, Lesky cites E. von Feuchtersleben, who in 1838 published his famous book *Diätetik der Seele*.

The second period (from 1848 to 1870) which Lesky calls the 'Second Medical School of Vienna', starts with the great post-revolutionary reform of organization of studies at the universities. The main figure of the medical faculty was C. Rokitansky whose teaching of pathological anatomy promoted, as Lesky very clearly shows, all branches of medicine to a very high degree. At the same time there were many other great teachers working in Vienna, such as Arlt, Brücke, Hebra, Hyrtl, Jaeger, Pitha, Sigmund, Skoda, Türck etc. Lesky discusses the currents and undercurrents in the medical sciences and what influence the various personalities and their different outlook had for the development and progress of the various specialties of medicine. Of course, such differences sometimes led to more or less serious conflicts; Lesky mentions those between Brücke and Hyrtl, Arlt and Jaeger, Czermak and Türck, Hebra and Oppolzer, etc. Another concerns the case of Semmelweis. Lesky does not mention the influence of cliques which in every period played an important role in Vienna's university matters; working behind the scenes, members of these cliques tried to promote their relatives or friends in preference to better qualified men, and

## Book Reviews

slighted personalities whose ideas did not conform to their opinions: Freud's is a case in point. Lesky stresses that most of the great discoveries were made in the quite inadequate and narrow premises of the 'Allgemeine Krankenhaus' and the institute buildings which were even worse. But she sees in the close neighbourhood of the various clinical departments in *one* hospital and the proximity of the theoretical institutes a great advantage allowing for a very useful exchange of views and ideas among the doctors of the different branches of medical practice and research.

'New Specialties—Laboratory and Experiment' is the title given by Lesky to the third period (from 1870 to the end of the century). She indicates the ever-increasing specialization of medicine and greater use of laboratory methods and experiment in clinical medicine and research. She also refers to the difficulties of catering for the ever-increasing number of students, many of whom were coming from abroad; thus it became necessary to abandon the teaching at the bedside and to do it in the lecture theatre, and to build new institutes with larger laboratories and more accommodation for students. Quite a few of the university chairs had to be duplicated, some even tripled, and new chairs were created as the number of specialties grew. How quickly every progress was taken up in Vienna is shown by Lesky relating the history of the X-ray department in the 'Allgemeine Krankenhaus': On 1 January 1896 Röntgen communicated the discovery to his friend F. Exner, professor of physics in Vienna; 10 days later F. Exner's brother S. Exner, professor of physiology, gave a short address to the 'Gesellschaft der Ärzte', on 23 January the *Wiener Klinische Wochenschrift* published some X-ray photographs; a few days later a gallstone was shown on an X-ray plate. A few months later the 21-years-old Dr. L. Freund discovered the healing properties of the X-rays at the dermatological clinic. In 1898 the 'Central Röntgenlaboratorium' was established, which under the directorship of G. Holzkecht gained world fame. Among other events marking medical progress Lesky lists Koller's discovery of the anaesthetic action of cocaine on the cornea, the invention of laryngoscopy and gastroscopy by Türck, Czermak and Störck, of the cystoscope by Nitze and Leiter, Billroth's gastrectomy, Schauta-Wertheim's total hysterectomy, Wagner-Jauregg's fever therapy of dementia paralytica, Lorenz's treatment of congenital hip dislocation, Gruber-Durham's detection of agglutination, etc.

The book is written with great precision and brings a wealth of detailed knowledge; many of the abundant sources cited have never been utilized before. One would perhaps like to get some more information on the influence of the internal and external political scene and of the social circumstances on the evolution of medicine; but such a discussion probably would have transgressed the boundaries of the book. It certainly is a standard work which everyone interested in the history of medicine in the past century will consult with great benefit.

A. ARNSTEIN

*A Short History of Public Health*, by C. FRASER BROCKINGTON, 2nd ed., London, J. & A. Churchill, 1966, pp. vii, 240. 30s.

This is a new edition of the well-known work originally published in 1956. Opportunity has been taken to incorporate the results of modern research, notably Lambert's